CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Proposal Name: Five Points Fuels Reduction Project

Proposal Date: 5/4/2020

Proponent Name: Mike Johnson

Line Officer: Bill Gamble

District: La Grande Ranger District

County: Union

Anticipated Implementation: 9/2021

Signing Authority: District Ranger

PALS Tracking #: 59492

Project File: C:\Users\briannakcarollo\Box\01. brianna.carollo Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\5 Points Fuels Reduction

GIS Info: T:\FS\NFS\WallowaWhitman\Project\lagFivePointsFuelsReduction2020

General Location: 5 miles NW of La Grande

Applicable Management Areas: 1, 1W, 3, 3A

Legal Description: Township 2 South, Range 37 East

Elevation Range: 3,500ft - 4,500 ft

Watersheds: Five Points Watershed

APPLICABLE CATEGORY

This proposal is categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS because it was designed within the parameters for **Wildfire Resilience - Section 605 of HFRA (16 U.S.C. 6591d) (FSH 1909.15, 32.3(9)) (DM Required),** pending extraordinary circumstance determinations. This category is applicable for this project because:

☒ The project is in an area designated prior to March 23, 2018 in accordance with section 602(b) and (c) of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

☒ The proposed treatments are in wildland urban interface **and/or** in Condition Classes 2 or 3 and Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III outside the wildland urban interface that contain very high wildfire hazard potential.

☒ The project maximizes the retention of old-growth and large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote stands that are resilient to insects and disease, and reduce the risk or extent of, or increase the resilience to, wildfires.

☒ The project is not located: in congressionally designated Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas; in areas where the removal of vegetation is restricted or prohibited by statute or by Presidential proclamation; or in areas where the activities described above will be inconsistent with the applicable Land and Resource Management Plan.

☒ The project's number of acres treated does not exceed 3,000 acres.

☒ The project does not include the establishment of permanent roads. Temporary roads will be constructed but will be decommissioned no later than three years after the project is completed.

☒ Public notice and scoping have been conducted.

☒ The project was developed through a collaborative process that includes multiple interested persons representing diverse interests and is transparent and non-exclusive

☒ The best available scientific information is being considered to maintain or restore ecological integrity, including maintaining or restoring forested vegetation structure, function, composition, and connectivity.

☒ All activities proposed under this project are consistent with the Land and resource management plan.

☒ Extraordinary circumstances are being considered during the analysis and decision-making process.

PROPOSAL

Background and Existing Conditions

Historic Management

Fire suppression, large tree harvest, and grazing within the project area created the historically uncharacteristic stand conditions we see today. District specialists identified an imbalance of important forest structures compared to the historical range of variability (HRV). This imbalance degrades forest resilience, limits wildlife habitat, and increases the risk of stand mortality from drought, insects, and wildfire.

Developments at Risk

The Five Points project area contains 3,430 acres of the La Grande Valley Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) which includes residences and private forestlands. A WUI area, as defined in the Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP, revised 2016), is "An area strategically identified that provides effective wildfire defense for communities, infrastructure, and other values at risk or intermingle with wildland fuels and offer opportunities for broadened mitigation measures designed to interrupt wildfire spread and modify wildfire behavior in order to protect social, economic, and environmental interest." The project area also shares a boundary with Mount Emily Recreation Area (MERA) and the Five Points Roadless area. Current stand conditions make these highly valued areas vulnerable to wildfire transmission.

Past investment in forest thinning and fuels reduction activities have occurred on adjacent national forest, county, and non-industrial private forestlands. The cross-boundary approach for treatments within the Five Points area was designed to reduce wildfire transmission potential and fire intensity on the main ridgeline dividing the Five Point drainage and Grande Ronde Valley. Integration of the Five Points project with both recently completed and planned work on adjacent private and county lands helps promote fire adapted communities and restore resilient landscapes as envisioned by the National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy (CWS).

Wildfire

Fire regime condition class (FRCC) is a measure of stand departure from the historical natural fire regime. Departures can result in changes to one or more of the following ecological components: vegetation (species composition, structural stages, stand age, canopy cover and mosaic pattern across the landscape); fuel composition; fire frequency, severity, and pattern. Modeling in the project area shows roughly half of the project area has moderate to severe departure (FRCC 2 and 3) from historic conditions. These conditions create an elevated risk for uncharacteristic fire behavior.

There is high potential for a wildfire to become established within the adjacent Mt. Emily Roadless Area and progress towards the La Grande Valley WUI. There is also a high potential for a fire to be ignited in the Grande Ronde River corridor south of the project area from either a passing car on Interstate 84 or from freight train sparks along the railway. Terrain and fuels within the watershed create conditions for a rapidly moving wildfire.

Wildlife

The Five Points watershed historically sustained dry upland forest habitat for wildlife species dependent on large trees and open foraging conditions. Heavy fuel loading and overstocking compromise the habitat suitability of these stands by increasing the risk for uncharacteristic disturbance events which threaten the survival of remaining large ponderosa pine.

Insect and Disease Presence

The degree of insect activity and disease presence varies within the project area. Species composition, stand density, tree size, and tree vigor factor into stand's response to insect activity and susceptibility to disease. Mountain Pine Beetle, larch casebearer moth, Western Pine Beetle, Fir Engraver, and Balsam Wooly Adelgid all reside within the project area and have created patches of high tree mortality and increased breeding populations. Tree diseases in the project area include annosus and armillaria root infections, Indian paint fungus, lodgepole cankers, heart rots and dwarf mistletoe.

Vegetation

POTENTIAL VEGETATION GROUPS: (PVG) is an aggregation of plant association groups (PAGs) with similar environmental regimes and dominant plant species. Each aggregation (PVG) typically includes PAGs representing a predominant temperature or moisture influence (Powell 2019).

Cold Upland Forest *(0.5% of the project area)*

- This forest type represents less than 1% of the project area and will not receive treatment, therefore will not be discussed further.

Dry Upland Forest Group Characteristics *(36% of the project area)*

- Low to moderate productivity.
- Stands were historically maintained by fire and dominated by shade intolerant species like western larch and ponderosa pine.
- Species composition in these stands are now a mix of grand fir, Douglas-fir, and ponderosa pine with some lodgepole, Engelmann spruce and western larch.
- Understory conifers are dominated by seedlings and saplings mostly of grand fir and Douglas-fir.
- Ground vegetation is dominated by snowberry, pinegrass, and elk sedge.

Moist Upland Forest Group Characteristics *(48% of the project area)*

- Most productive sites in the Blue Mountains
- Species composition in these stands are a mix of species and size classes with predominantly Douglas fir, grand fir, followed by lodgepole pine, spruce, and subalpine fir cover types.
- Early seral species-western larch and ponderosa pine occur within these stands especially where intermixed with dry upland forests.
- Understories are dominated by ocean spray and big huckleberry, and twinflower.

HRV ANALYSIS

Historic Range of Variation (HRV) is meant to reflect ecosystem properties free of major influence by Euro-Americans. HRV can provide insights into ecosystem resilience and ecosystem capacity including disturbance regime functions and inherent variation in ecosystem conditions and processes (USDA Forest Service 1997). HRV represents stand and landscape conditions historically more resilient to drought, insects, pathogens, and severe wildfire. The following table compares existing structures to the project area HRV by Potential Vegetation Group (PVG).

Table 1. HRV Analysis for the Five Points Watershed (38,403 acres)

	Potential Vegetation Group (PVG)					
	Cold Upland Forest		Moist Upland Forest		Dry Upland Forest	
Forest Structure stages	Range of Variation (%)	Existing Condition (%)	Range of Variation (%)	Existing Condition (%)	Range of Variation (%)	Existing Condition (%)

Stand Initiation	20-45%	43.0	20-30%	11.39	15-30%	18.77
Stem Exclusion	15-30%	2.6	20-30%	6.90	10-20%	10
Understory Re-initiation	10-25%	48.1	15-25%	63.22	0-5%	61.21
Old Forest Single Strata	5-20%	0.0	10-20%	0.02	40-65%	0.19
Old Forest Multi Strata	10-25%	6.2	15-20%	19.68	1-15%	10.65

As depicted in the table above, both dry and moist PVGs are outside of their historic ranges for most stand structures.

- Dry PVG – understory re-initiation is overrepresented and old forest single strata is underrepresented.
- Moist PVG - Stand initiation, stem exclusion, old forest single strata structure all underrepresented. Understory re-initiation stage is overrepresented.

Purpose and Need for Action

The district identified resource conditions (see existing conditions, above) within the planning area that do not meet desired future conditions outlined in the 1990 Wallowa-Whitman Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), as amended. To reduce the gap between desired and future conditions there is a need to:

1. Restore and maintain vegetative conditions and wildlife habitats consistent with the historic range of variation in terms of vegetation composition, structural stages, and disturbance patterns (fire regimes).
2. Create and maintain fuel profiles within the project area that minimize risk to firefighter safety, public, adjacent private and county lands, natural resources, and developed lands (ex. Private residences/structures, Mount Emily Recreation Area) in the event of a wildfire.
3. Create and maintain vegetative conditions that are more resistant and/or resilient to anticipated increases in fire frequency and severity due to climate change.

Treatment Selection Criteria

TREATMENTS ARE FOCUSED ON PREVIOUSLY MANAGED STANDS.

Most units have records of previous management. Units with no documented management records have large diameter stumps scattered throughout, indicating historic removal of large diameter early seral species.

TREATMENTS ARE LOCATED ADJACENT TO EXISTING OPEN AND CLOSED ROADS FOR UNIT ACCESS.

No new system roads are proposed.

Unit proximity to high-use National Forest System (NFS) roads prevents these areas from functioning as satisfactory security habitat for big game species. We determined the project area includes sufficient cover and foraging habitat for big game species away from roads (refer to wildlife specialist report for HEI and distance band analysis), and we do not plan to treat these critical habitat areas.

Units close to roads may serve as strategic fuels breaks. Treatment along these roads would improve fire management options and create conditions that reduce risk to firefighter safety.

UNITS HAVE SOIL TYPES AND TOPOGRAPHIC POSITIONS THAT ARE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE DROUGHTY CONDITIONS INTO THE FUTURE.

Droughty Soil Probability identifies soil types that have a thin organic layer, a high bulk density, and parent material with decreased available water capacity (see soil map in Appendix B). Available water capacity is the maximum amount of water soil can provide to plants. Areas with droughty soil probability above 60% do not provide water for plants during drought. Lack of available water decreases plant vigor and reduces the ability to mount a defense against insect and disease.

Areas with droughty soils can occur in both dry and moist PVGs. Drought tolerant species have a competitive advantage growing on these soil types, because they are adapted to maintain vigor throughout drought periods (summer months). Twenty five of the 27 commercial treatment units are located on droughty soils where planned treatments will favor retention of more drought tolerant species such as ponderosa pine.

TREATMENTS PROPOSED WITHIN FIRE REGIME CONDITION CLASS 2 OR 3.

Most commercial treatments are proposed within dry PVG stands with moderate to high departure from historic conditions and where the expected fire regime is high frequency and low severity. Moist forest treatments focus on areas where remnant fire-tolerant western larch and ponderosa pine indicate large-diameter, widely spaced, and early seral species existed historically.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN DRY PINE DOMINATED FOREST BENEFIT DRY AND MOIST MIXED CONIFER FOREST.

Protecting old trees, reducing surface fuels, reducing overall forest density, and shifting composition from fire intolerant to fire tolerant species benefits both pine dominated forest and mixed conifer forest. Wildlife use and ecological processes that were historically characteristic of moist mixed conifer forests were compatible with lower densities and basal area than exist today (Margolis and Malevich, 2016). Intermixed moist and dry mixed conifer forest experienced similar fire disturbance regimes as ponderosa pine stands in the past and are likely to experience similar fire disturbance regimes in the future (Johnson, 2017).

DRY FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIONS SUPPORT HABITAT CONSERVATION STRATEGIES.

Avian focal species are a comprehensive tool to support ecosystem management, because conservation is directed at the range of important habitat conditions for birds within the ecosystem. Three avian focal species that prefer dry forest habitat were identified within the project area (White-headed woodpecker, Flammulated owl, Lewis's woodpecker). To support these species, we designed restoration strategies to enhance dry forest habitats. These treatments promote large tree, single-layered canopy with an open, park-like understory dominated by herbaceous cover, scattered shrubs, and patches of pine regeneration. Restoring dry forest to promote these conditions would positively impact conservation strategies for theses focal species (Altman and Bresson, 2017).

Commercial Fuels Reduction and Vegetation Management Treatments

HTH – COMMERCIAL THINNING

Variable density commercial thinning removes overtopped, suppressed, and co-dominant trees to reduce competition for site resources and remove ladder fuels underneath mature trees. Remaining trees would be variably distributed and dominated by drought and fire tolerant species. Ten percent of treatment areas would be left untreated and retained for green tree snag replacements and wildlife habitat. These wildlife retention areas should be located outside patches with an abundance of suppressed and diseased grand fir.

With this prescription we plan to:

- Reduce stand densities to the Lower Management Zone, where aligned with the mollisol soil type, to promote large tree structure development ins Stem Exclusion and Understory Reinitiation stand stages.
- Thin (HTH-OFSS) one or more understory layers in approximately 81 acres of dry Old Forest Multi Stratum (OFMS) stands to restore old forest single story structural conditions.

- Units with residual fuel loading after harvest may undergo prescribed burning to reduce surface fuels and promote healthy understory vegetation.

Table 2. HTH Units

Unit Number	Management Area Code	Rx Detail	Acres	PVG	Structure	Structure post RX	FRCC	Drought Probability (%)
1	3	HTH	13.1	DRY UF	SE	UR	1	80-100
2	3	HTH-OFSS	47.3	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	1	80-100
7	3	HTH-OFSS	3.9	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	1	80-100
9A	3	HTH	4.8	DRY UF	SE	UR	1	80-100
10	3	HTH	72.4	DRY UF	SE	UR	1	80-100
17	3	HTH	25.6	DRY UF	SE	UR	1	80-100
42	1	HTH	19.1	DRY UF	UR	UR-OFSS	1	80-100
43	1	HTH	17.2	DRY UF	UR	UR-OFSS	1	80-100
45	1,3	HTH	34.8	DRY UF/ MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	80-100
45A	1	HTH-OFSS	14.2	DRY UF/ MOIST UF	OFMS	OFSS	1	80-100
48	1	HTH	6	DRY UF	UR	UR-OFSS	1	80-100
50	1, 3	HTH	14.5	DRY UF	SE	UR	1	80-100
51	1, 3	HTH-OFSS	6.8	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	3	80-100
52	1, 3	HTH-OFSS	8.9	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	1	80-100
55	1	HTH	24	DRY UF	SE	UR	3	80-100
57	1	HTH	14.3	DRY UF	SE	UR	3	80-100
Total			326.9					

Improvement thinning enhances growth and regeneration potential for early seral species. This prescription retains fire and drought tolerant species while removing fire intolerant, damaged, suppressed and/or diseased trees. Residual stand densities would be near the stand's lower management zone consistent with the Historic Range of Variability for species composition. Ten percent of treatment areas will be retained for wildlife habitat and green tree snag replacements. Retention areas will be located outside of pockets with widespread suppressed and diseased grand fir.

With this prescription we plan to:

- Thin stand densities to the Lower Management Zone (LMZ), where aligned with the mollisol soil type, to promote development of large tree structures from Stem Exclusion and Understory Reinitiation stand stages.
- Consider harvest below the LMZ where annosus root rot (unit 44) or Douglas-fir mistletoe (units, 9, 13, 19, 20, 30, 32, 41, 53, 54) disease is widespread and the amount of suppressed late seral species within stands is high. These units may later be interplanted with drought tolerant species.
- Thin approximately 205 acres of OFMS to restore OFSS conditions by removing one or more understory canopy layers (HIM-OFSS)
- Units with residual fuel loading after harvest may undergo prescribed burning to reduce surface fuels and promote healthy understory vegetation.

Table 3. HIM Units

Unit Number	Management Area Code	Rx Detail	Acres	PVG	Structure	Structure post RX	FRCC	Drought Probability (%)
9	3	HIM-OFSS	24.9	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	1	80-100
13	1	HIM-OFSS	10.8	MOIST UF	OFMS	OFSS	3	80-100
19	3	HIM-OFSS	46.6	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	3	80-100
20	3	HIM	8	DRY UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	80-100
30	1	HIM	15.7	MOIST UF	UR	UF-OFSS	3	0-20
32	1, 3	HIM-OFSS	47.8	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	1	0-20
40	1	HIM-OFSS	16.2	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	1	80-100
41	1	HIM-OFSS	18.6	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	1	80-100
44	1	HIM-OFSS	36	MOIST UF	OFMS	OFSS	3	80-100
53	1	HIM	12.6	DRY UF	UR	UR-OFSS	1	80-100
54	1	HIM-OFSS	4.4	MOIST UF	OFMS	OFSS	3	80-100
Total			241.6					

Non-Commercial Fuels Reduction and Vegetation Management Treatments

PRECOMMERCIAL THINNING (PCT)

Precommercial thinning decreases densities in young stands to promote the health of remaining drought and fire tolerant species. Treatments involve thinning trees smaller than 9" diameter at breast height (DBH) and leaving selected trees at variable spacing (approximately 20 – 30 ft apart). Ten percent of treatment areas will be retained for wildlife habitat and green tree replacements. Retention areas will be located outside of pockets with widespread suppressed and diseased grand fir.

With this prescription we plan to:

- Mechanically treat (PCT-M) vegetation on slopes 30% or less with a slashbuster or a grapple piling tracked machine
- Treat slash (piled and burned or lopped and scattered) if located in a strategically important area for wildfire response
- Thin approximately 47 acres of OFMS to promote OFSS conditions by removing understory canopy layers less than 9" DBH

Table 4. PCT Units

Unit Number	Management Area Code	Rx Detail	Acres	PVG	Structure	Structure post RX	FRCC	Drought Probability (%)
3	3	PCT-OFSS-M	4.2	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	1	80-100
5	3	PCT-M	8.0	MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	60-80
6	1	PCT-M	29.9	MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	80-100
14	1	PCT-M	6.4	Dry UF	UR	UR-OFSS	1	60-80
15	1,3	PCT-OFSS-M	15.2	Dry UF	OFMS	OFSS	1, 3	60-80
18	3	PCT-M	37.9	MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	1	80-100
21	3	PCT-M	12.5	Moist UR	UR	UR-OFSS	3	0-60
22	3	PCT-M	7.1	MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	0-20
23	3	PCT-M	18.8	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	0-20
24	3	PCT-M	17.5	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	0-20
25	3	PCT-M	71.9	DRY UF	SE	UR	3	80-100

26	3	PCT-M	11.8	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	80-100
27	3	PCT-M	19.3	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	0-20
28	3	PCT-M	53.8	DRY UF& MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	0-20
28A	3	PCT-M	32.9	DRY UF	SE	UR	3	80-100
34	1, 3	PCT-M	18.7	MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	0-20
35	1, 3	PCT-M	8.9	MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	0-20
36	1	PCT-M	19	MOIST UF	OFMS	UR-OFSS	1	0-20
37	1	PCT-OFMS-M	28	MOIST UF	OFMS	OFSS	1	0-20
38	1	PCT-M	3.9	MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	0-20
46	1	PCT-M	26.3	MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	0-20
47	1, 3	PCT-M	46.3	DRY UF	OFMS	OFSS	1, 3	80-100
58	3A	PCT-M	32.4	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	40-60
59	3A	PCT-Roadside	8.2	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	20-40
60	3A	PCT-M	39.5	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	40-60
61	3A	PCT-Roadside	2.1	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	40-60
62	3A	PCT-M	76.3	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	40-60
63	3A	PCT-M	58.3	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	20-40
64	3A	PCT-M	25.1	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	0-20
65	3A	PCT-M	91.6	MOIST UF	UR	UR-OFSS	3	0-20
66	3A	PCT-M	18.4	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	20-40
67	3A	PCT-M	23.8	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	0-20

68	3A	PCT-M	26.7	MOIST UF	SE	UR	3	0-20
TOTAL			**900.5**					

PRESCRIBED BURNING

Prescribed burning reduces surface fuels, thins suppressed trees, and increases canopy base heights. Planned ignitions, when appropriately timed for moderate fuel moistures, generally burn with lower intensity and severity than wildfire. Control lines include roads, natural barriers, and brush removal rather than bare mineral soil line construction, where possible.

Fuels blocks: 1,232 acres

Removal Systems Summary

Proposed harvest treatments would remove approximately 5.6 million board feet of saw and 2.7 million board feet of non-saw material using the following yarding systems:

- 557.5 acres ground based yarding systems

The district proposes approximately 14.35 miles of road maintenance, including installation of 3 culverts. Approximately 7.79 miles of administratively closed roads would be re-opened to facilitate harvest and fuel reduction activities.

The project requires less than 1.3 miles of temporary roads to facilitate harvest systems. Temporary roads would be restored to productive land base by removing any culverts, decompacting the road surface and covering all disturbed areas with slash. Restoration efforts may also include camouflaging entrances to discourage use, and/or seeding with appropriate native species to promote effective ground cover.

The district does not propose any new construction of permanent roads.

Post Sale Road Management Plan

No permanent changes to the existing road system are proposed.

Implementation

The district anticipates implementation of this project to begin in October 2021.

Project Design Criteria and Mitigations

District specialists incorporated design criteria that minimize impacts to sensitive resources such as wildlife, riparian habitats, aquatic species, heritage resources, rangeland, botanical resources, and invasive plants.

Table 5. Project Design Criteria

Plants	
PL-1 Avoidance	Exclude known sensitive plant population locations from ground disturbing treatments by implementing a no-disturbance buffer around each site. Avoid ground disturbing activities on previously undisturbed non-forested terrain.
PL-2 RHCAs	Exclude direct ignition of prescribed fire within Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs); but

	allow low intensity prescribed fire to back into these areas. Follow Forest Plan standards and guidelines for protecting RHCAs from ground disturbing activities.

Fisheries	
FISH-1 RHCAs	Stream and riparian protection are based on Forest Plan as amended by PACFISH-INFISH. PACFISH-INFISH standards and guidelines related to timber harvest, roads, and fire apply to this project.
FISH-2 Protection of Fish Habitat	Prescribed fire ignition will not occur within 300 feet of Category 1 streams, 150 feet of any Category 2 streams, and 100 feet of Category 4 streams. Low and moderate intensity backing fires will be allowed within the no ignition buffers. When drafting water, sources would be monitored for reduced flow. During low flow conditions (less than 5 cfs), spring fed ponds would be used as sources prior to the use of stream sources whenever feasible. Refueling, repair, and maintenance of equipment would be done at landings or on forest roads outside of RHCAs. Fuel would not be stored within any RHCA. Timber sale purchaser would prepare a spill containment plan that would ensure that spilled fuel would not leave the site of the spill. Avoid impacting live or dead trees associated with temporary roads, culverts, or maintenance on existing roads in RHCAs. If safety or other hazardous trees are observed during implementation, work with a District Fish Biologist or Hydrologist to place the tree in the stream to help move large wood RMOs towards Forest Plan standards.
FISH-3 Roads	State of Oregon in-stream work window (July 1 thru October 31) will be followed for all road maintenance activities occurring within stream banks. Temporary culverts will be installed during dry conditions on Category 4 streams. After completion of the project, these structures will be removed and hauled from the project area. Banks of crossings will be reshaped to match undisturbed sections adjacent to the crossing. Slough and waste materials removed during road maintenance activities, including ditch and culvert cleaning, would be deposited in approved disposal sites outside RHCAs. For erosion control and stabilization, the disposal site would be seeded with native seed. During road maintenance and snow plowing, side cast of materials would not occur where these materials could be directly or indirectly introduced into a stream, or where the placement of these materials could contribute to the destabilization of the slope. Road reconstruction would limit vegetation modification to the road prism, road surface, and ditch lines to that work necessary to maintain a safe travel way and functional drainage system. Ditches would only be maintained where the water captured by the ditch is not able to be transported to the adjacent drainage structure that carries the water across the road.

Wildlife

<table>
<tr><td>WL-1 Down Woody Material</td><td>Where material is available, all treatment units (harvest and prescribed burn) would exceed the minimum levels for down woody material described in the table below for each species.
<table>
<tr><th>SPECIES</th><th>PIECES PER AC</th><th>TONS PER AC</th><th>PIECE LENGTH AND DIAMETER SMALL END Diameter | Min Length</th><th>TOTAL LINEAL LENGTH</th></tr>
<tr><td>Ponderosa Pine</td><td>3-6</td><td>5-10</td><td>12” | 6ft</td><td>20-40 ft</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mixed Conifer</td><td>15-20</td><td>7-15</td><td>12” | 6ft</td><td>100-140 ft</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lodgepole pine</td><td>15-20</td><td>7-15</td><td>8” | 6ft</td><td>120-160 ft</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>WL-2 Snags</td><td>All snags would be retained unless identified as posing a safety hazard. Snags felled for safety reasons would be retained onsite to contribute to coarse wood where coarse wood amounts are deficient.
To reduce the potential for loss of snags during prescribed burning, employ passive lighting techniques near snags larger than 12 inches.
Techniques should consider slope, wind, and fuel characteristics to encourage a backing fire.
Unit prep should include scraping down to bare mineral soil around the base of large snags (> 21 inches dbh) at higher risk due to heavy fuels accumulations at the base, pullback of fuels may be necessary prior to prescribed burning.</td></tr>
<tr><td>WL-3 Green Tree Replacement (GTR)</td><td>Sufficient green trees of adequate size are to be retained in harvest units to provide replacements for snags and logs through time. GTRs need to be retained at a rate of 25-45 trees per acre, depending on vegetation group.
All harvest prescriptions in the project would retain GTRs within or above this range. See the WWNF Green Tree Snag Replacement Guidelines for details associated with managing for induced mortality.
No live trees greater than or equal to 21 inches DBH would be cut unless they create a safety hazard during logging operations.</td></tr>
<tr><td>WL-4 Raptors and Cavity Nesters</td><td>Active raptor nest sites found during field reconnaissance for this project would be protected during project activities. If active raptor nests are located during layout, marking, or project activities, appropriate protection measures would be prescribed as described in the Wildlife Inventory document in the project file.</td></tr>
<tr><td>WL-5 Goshawk Nest Sites</td><td>One active goshawk nest was located during surveys within the project boundary. The nest area was dropped from treatment consideration and buffered according to the Eastside Screens. A follow-up survey will be conducted prior to project implementation.
If goshawk nesting is confirmed during additional surveys or project implementation, a 30 acre no treatment zone around nest trees would be applied, and a 400 acre Post Fledging Area (PFA) would be established with treatment restrictions outlined in the Eastside Screens.</td></tr>
<tr><td>WL-6 Big Game Winter Range</td><td>Logging operations would be avoided during the period between December 1 through April 1 in the project area units. This is to ensure protections for big game during a sensitive period. Waivers to operate during this time period may be requested and would be evaluated on a case by case basis by the District Ranger.</td></tr>
<tr><td>WL-7 Management Indicator and Neotropical Migratory</td><td>If management indicator species are discovered within prescribed burning units the following protective measures could be applied, either separately or in combination, to reduce possible impacts to snags with nest cavities and to protect other nest sites during burning:
Prep around snags to bare mineral soil and eliminate ladder fuels
varied lighting techniques (use a backing fire)</td></tr>
</table>

Species	• fall burning or deferred burning until after the unit is no longer being used during the reproductive period • To reduce the potential for impacts to nesting land birds, prescribed burning activities projected to occur on or after May 20, and/or past the onset of vegetation leaf-out, would be reviewed by a district or forest wildlife biologist. The District Biologist would then provide recommendations concerning prescribed burning after May 20 and/or past the onset of vegetation leaf-out.

Invasive Species	
INV-1 Roadside populations	Treatment of the noxious weed sites located along roads should be a high priority, along with monitoring. • Rock pit and sources should be inspected and cleared prior to use of any materials. • Before road maintenance activities on roads with active infestations occurs the contracting officer (COR) will contact the District Noxious Weed Coordinator, to inform them of maintenance plans. The Noxious Weed Coordinator will take the appropriate action to treat the noxious weeds on the infested portions of these roads. (Note: Recommended treatment includes removal of previous year's stalks, to be conducted before maintenance activities occur there; and maintenance activities should not be conducted after the current year's plants have bolted and flowered (mid to late June) unless prior treatment of current year's growth occurs.)
INV-2 New populations	If new noxious weed infestations are located within the project area, a noxious weed inventory and site assessment (as defined in the W-W INWMP) will be completed. Location of other species, conditions or future treatments may require additional analysis to determine the appropriate treatment method.
INV-3 Known Populations	All mapped weed sites will be designated as "Areas to Protect" and include in the contract package for use by the contract administrator. • Staging areas should not be built on or near sites of noxious weed infestation.
INV-4 Post-treatment	Highly disturbed areas will be seeded. The seed mix to be used will consist of native species, or a non-native species mix, to be approved by the District Diverse Species Program Coordinator. This may include one fast germinating annual grass species to provide immediate ground cover. Seed application rates will be adjusted, as needed to compensate for the broadcast method of application, and to generate vegetation densities adequate to help in deterrence of noxious weed invasion. • Seed will be certified weed free, per the Wallowa-Whitman INWMP protocol. • All hay or straw used for mulching, erosion control, or other rehabilitation purposes will be weed free (per the Wallowa-Whitman INWMP protocol).
INV-5 Equipment Requirements	All equipment to be operated on the project area will be cleaned in a manner sufficient to prevent noxious weeds from being carried onto the project area. • This requirement does not apply to passenger vehicles or other equipment used exclusively on roads. Cleaning, if needed, will occur off National Forest System lands. • Cleaning will be inspected and approved by the Forest Officer in charge of administering the project.

Soils – See appendix A for units affected

SQ-1 Greater than 20 percent Detrimental Soil Conditions	In areas where **more than 20 percent** detrimental soil conditions exist from prior activities, the cumulative detrimental effects from project implementation and restoration must, at a minimum, not exceed the conditions prior to the planned activity and should move towards a net improvement in soil quality (R6 Soil Quality Standards) by rehabilitating landings and used skid trails as needed through de-compacting to bring post-activity DSCs to acceptable levels in each activity area.
SQ-2 Less than 20 percent Detrimental Soil Conditions	In areas where **less than 20 percent** detrimental soil conditions exist from prior activities, the cumulative detrimental effect of the current activity following project implementation and restoration must not exceed 20 percent. In units expected to exceed 20 percent detrimental soil conditions: 1. Rehabilitate landings and used skid trails as needed through de-compacting to bring post-activity DSCs to acceptable levels in each activity area. 2. If de-compacting is not feasible (i.e., shallow, clayey, rocky and/or topographic constraints) restrict harvest activities to winter harvest conditions. 3. If none of the above actions are feasible, then the treatment area should be excluded from mechanical activities.
SQ-3 Seasonal Conditions	Limit equipment operations to frozen, snow-covered or acceptable soil moisture conditions. Limit machine pivots and turns, where possible. During the winter season ground conditions shall meet at least one of the following criteria for machine operations: 1. Six inches of frozen ground, 2. Four inches of frozen ground with one foot of snow, 3. Two feet (>24 inches) or more of snow, 4. One foot (>12 inches) slash mat in combination with one foot of snow, or 5. Soil moisture conditions acceptable for minimizing rutting or puddling of soils Some “watch-out” situations include: 1. Machine break-through begins to occur 2. Equipment tracks sink deeply (half the width of the track) below the soil surface with one or two passes 3. Ruts greater than six inches deep form 4. Mid-day temperatures are forecast to rise above freezing 5. Surface melt occurs over still-frozen subsurface
SQ-4 Shallow Soils	Avoid operating on shallow soils (<25 cm soil depth) and meadows unless over frozen ground/snow. Shallow soils and clayey soils should not be used for temporary roads, skid trails, slash piles, or log landings; unless no other location is practical and there is an existing prism in which case equipment activity should remain within existing prism as much as possible.
SQ-5 Udic Soils	Avoid early summer equipment operations on units with udic moisture regime (moist soils with inherent excess soil moisture either yearlong or on a seasonal basis). If this is not possible or there is evidence of lingering moisture present, operate on a bed of slash maintained at >12 inches to mitigate compaction and rutting.
SQ-6 Soil mitigations during ground-based operations	Ground-based equipment should not operate on sustained slopes exceeding 30%. Prioritize areas of slopes greater than 30% as leave areas within units. Designated skid trails should be spaced on average 100 feet apart, and the trails should average no more than 12 feet in width. Closer spacing due to complex terrain will be with Timber Sale administrator approval. Existing skid trails will be used as much as possible. 1. If equipment must leave designated trails for operational purposes, no more than two

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>passes over any piece of ground is permitted.

2. Ensure that water control structures (water bars or slash surfacing, as approved by the Sale Administrator or COR) are installed and maintained on skid trails that have gradients of 10 percent or more; Ensure erosion control structures are stabilized and working effectively before spring runoff.

When cut to length harvest systems are used, maintain an appropriate slash mat of at least 12” when possible during operations to prevent equipment weight from altering soil bulk density and causing displacement of effective ground cover. If unable to maintain an appropriate slash mat, impacts are expected to be the same as tractor logging.</td></tr>
<tr><td>SQ-7
Shallow and Nutrient Poor Soils</td><td>Whole-tree yarding methods should be avoided in shallow soils (<25cm), nutrient-poor (granitic soil, glacial outwash sands, many coarse-textured soils) soils or in sensitive areas. If not possible, backhaul slash and redistribute on skid trails to an average depth of 6 inches within the harvest area, and extend the period for reentry to allow more time for nutrient inputs.</td></tr>
<tr><td>SQ-8
Slope Instability & Mass Movement</td><td>Signs of slope instability and mass movement include cracks in soil, tilted or bent trees, increased spring activity or newly wet ground, hummocky or uneven terrain, sunken or broken roadbeds, and/or a recent sag pond has formed that isn’t human created. If visual evidence of landslides appears inside or near proposed management activities, treatment will be avoided as appropriate, to ensure potential slope failure is mitigated.</td></tr>
<tr><td>SQ-9
Organic matter mitigation</td><td>Strive to maintain fine organic matter (commonly referred to as the duff layer) over at least 65 percent of an activity area following both harvest and post-harvest operations. Keep fine organic matter disturbance to a minimum if the potential natural plant community on site is not capable of producing fine organic matter over 65 percent of the area (Regional Soil Quality Guidelines / FSH 2090.11).</td></tr>
<tr><td>SQ-10
Soil erosion mitigations</td><td>Prior to a large autumn precipitation event, ensure necessary water control structures are installed and maintained on skid trails over 10% slope after all ground-disturbing activities. Ensure erosion control structures are stabilized and working effectively and ensure that effective ground cover is left.

1. In areas of general disturbance in ash soils, the top layer (A Horizon) should be pulled back over any disturbed surface to prevent permanent loss of productivity. (Pull berms back over disturbed surfaces)

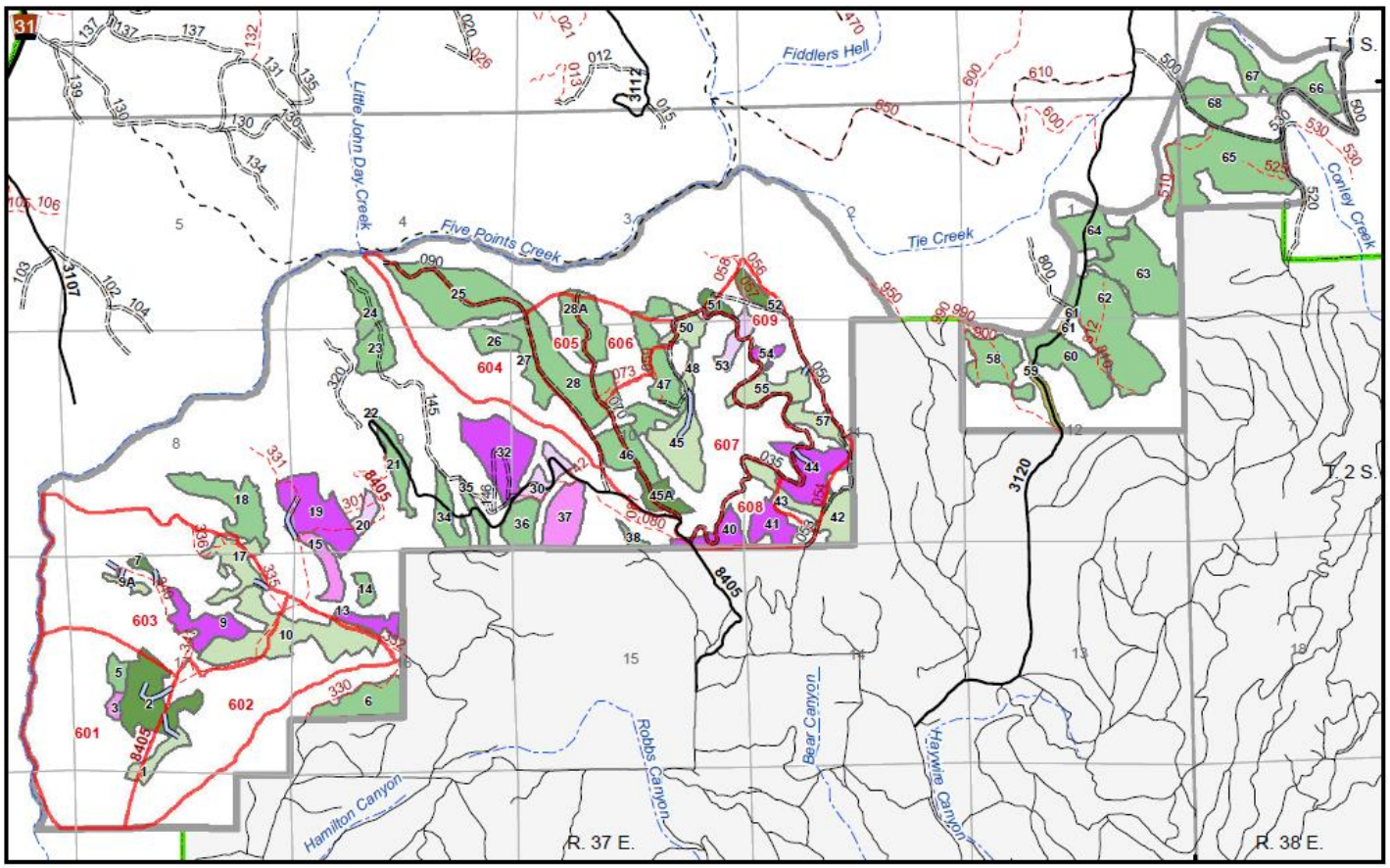
2. After completion of land management activities, the minimum effective ground cover (EGC) within each activity area within disturbed areas shall be in place to prevent erosion from exceeding background erosion rates for each of the four established erosion hazard classes: low, medium, high or very high (table below). Effective ground cover is defined as the basal area of perennial vegetation, plus duff, litter, and coarse fragments (greater than 2mm sizes), including tree crowns and shrubs that are in direct contact with the ground.

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Erosion Hazard Class</th><th colspan="2">Minimum Effective Ground Cover</th></tr>
<tr><th>1st Year</th><th>2nd Year</th></tr>
<tr><td>Low</td><td>20-30%</td><td>30-40%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>30-45%</td><td>40-60%</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

	High	45-60%	60-75%
	Very High	60-90%	75-90%

SQ-11 Soil rehabilitation	In areas where de-compacting is prescribed, de-compact to a depth sufficient to ameliorate the presence of detrimental soil compaction (usually between 2 and 12 inches). Discontinue de-compacting where large rocks are continually brought to the soil surface. If a change in soil color is noticed by the operator, operate at a shallower depth that prevents topsoil and subsoil from mixing. Skid trails requiring rehab on slopes > 30% should use erosion control methods that prevent channelized flow. Picking up ripping tines periodically down the slope. 1. Effective ground cover for all de-compacting treatments should take advantage of harvest slash. If no suitable organic material is available, then weed free straw or other equivalent erosion control measures should be applied on slopes exceeding 15%, adjacent to waterways and ditches (within 100 feet), prior to seasons ending precipitation event. See BMP AqEco-2 for additional information.
SQ-12 Roads	Non-system or legacy road templates will be used for temporary roads to the greatest extent possible. Creation of new temporary roads will be minimized. Where needed, locate to fit the terrain, and follow natural contours and minimize adverse effects to soil, water quality and riparian resources. Placement of new temporary roads should be on deep soils, as possible and avoid temporary roads on clay-dominated soils. Any new temporary roads within RHCAs will be approved by a hydrologist and sale administrator prior to constructing. Temporary road mitigation measures include: Locate temporary roads on flat terrain and benches where possible to reduce cut/fill construction and sedimentation risks Provide adequate drainage through proper location, out sloping and installing water bars as appropriate Install suitable storm water and erosion control measures (water bars, out slope) to stabilize disturbed areas and waterways before seasonal shutdown of project operations or when severe or successive storms are expected. Upon completion of use, rehabilitate temporary roads by removing any culverts, decompacting the road surface and covering all disturbed areas with slash. Rehab may also include re-contouring the natural slope profile as possible, camouflaging entrances, and seeding with native plant seed to promote effective ground cover. Avoid burning of slash and organic material incorporated into road rehabilitation during prescribed fire activities.
SQ-13 Fire and Fuels	Grapple pile operations would use the same skid trails as harvest operations where possible. Mechanical fuel operations would adhere to ground-based equipment PDCs mentioned above. Where feasible, pile slash on sites already disturbed by logging activities (e.g. skid trails, landings, and roads) to minimize additional detrimental soil impacts from burning. Avoid locating slash piles on shallow soils (<25cm). Piling slash should not occur above or below culverts or drainages to prevent sediment delivery. If piling fuels near a culvert or drainage, pile fuels away from the culvert or drainage high water flow. Limit hand pile size to less than 50 square feet to reduce organic horizon loss and limit soil heating. Pile burning when duff is moist or wet can reduce organic matter loss and soil heating. When using a boom-mounted equipment, operator shall plan off-trail travel paths to make full use

	of the machine's capability (e.g., using the full boom reach of the machine) to limit ground disturbance and minimize the number of off-trail passes. Reclaim all machine-built fire lines by redistributing displaced topsoil and unburned woody debris over the disturbed surface as needed after burn has been completed. Install water bars on fire lines using the following guideline: 5-15% slope every 150 feet, 16-35% slope every 40 feet, 36-60% slope every 30 feet, and >60% slope every 15 feet. On slopes less than 15%, water bars may not be needed if adequate amounts of slash are available. Slash and organic material that must be incorporated into road rehabilitation should not be intentionally burned.
SQ-14 Low productivity soil mitigation	Adequate amounts of slash should be left within the unit to retain fine organic matter on low productivity soils with inherently lower ability to retain adequate organic matter reservoirs. If Regional Soil Quality Standards and Guidelines are unable to be met because the stand is incapable of producing enough slash, all slash should be left untreated.



Date: 2/16/2021

FIVE POINTS FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT
Proposed Action Map

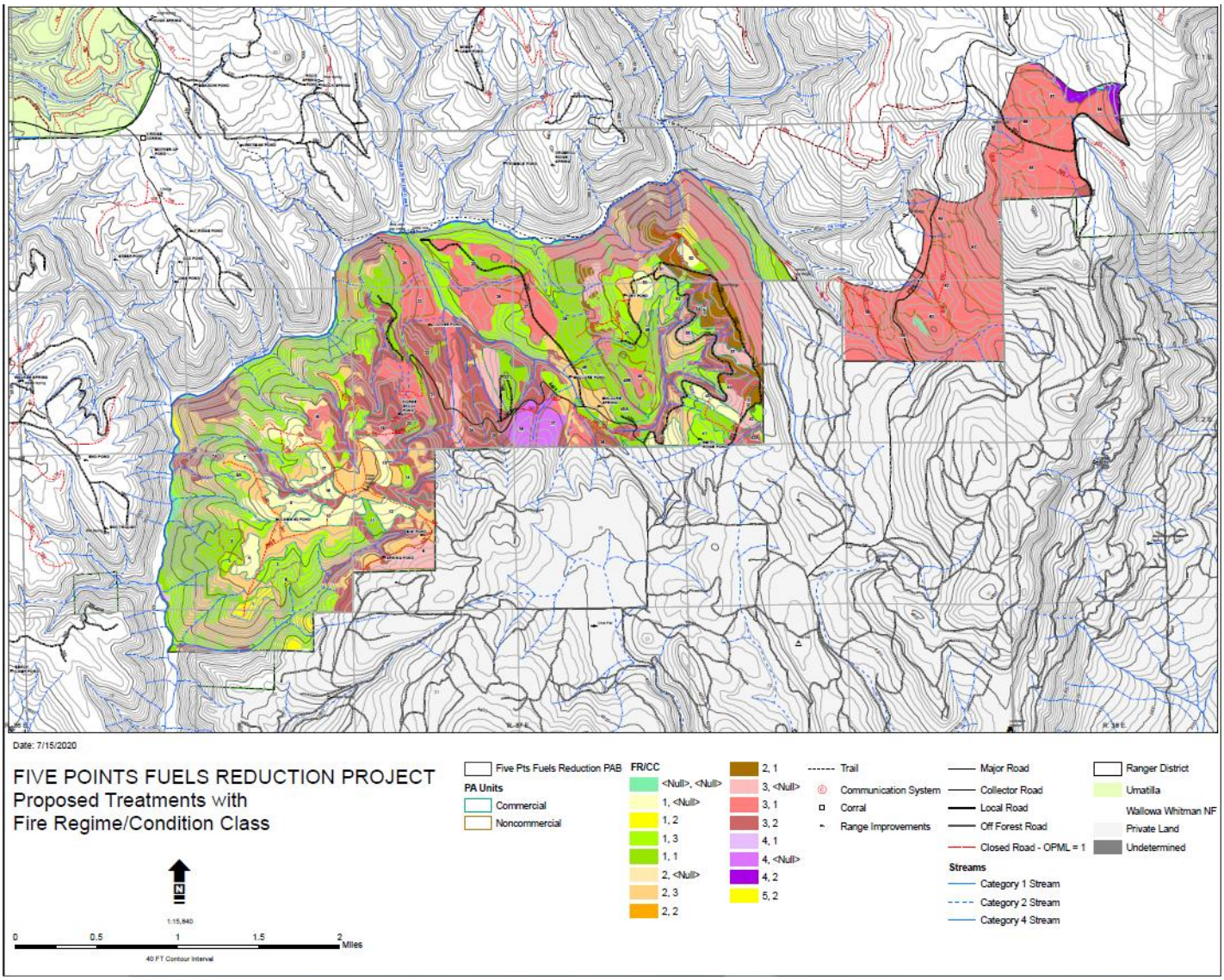
0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

1:40,000

Five Points Fuels Reduction Project Boundary
Fuel Blocks
Temp Roads
Trail
Major Road
Collector Road
Local Road
Off Forest Road
Closed Road - OPML = 1
Major Streams
Ranger District
Wallowa Whitman NF
Private Land
Undetermined

Proposed Action

- HIM
- HIM-OFSS
- HTH
- HTH-OFSS
- Noncommercial, PCT-M
- Noncommercial, PCT-OFSS-M
- PCT-Roadside


Date: 7/15/2020
FIVE POINTS FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT
Proposed Treatments with
Fire Regime/Condition Class
Five Pts Fuels Reduction PAB
PA Units
Commercial
Noncommercial
FR/CC
<Null>, <Null>
1, <Null>
1, 2
1, 3
1, 1
2, <Null>
2, 3
2, 2
2, 1
3, <Null>
3, 1
3, 2
4, 1
4, <Null>
4, 2
5, 2
Trail
Communication System
Corral
Range Improvements
Major Road
Collector Road
Local Road
Off Forest Road
Closed Road - OPML = 1
Streams
Category 1 Stream
Category 2 Stream
Category 4 Stream
Ranger District
Umatilla
Wallowa Whitman NF
Private Land
Undetermined
N
1:15,840
0
0.5
1
1.5
2
Miles
40 FT Contour Interval

PROPOSAL SCREENING

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Given the nature of the proposal, the Responsible Official is requesting documentation to demonstrate compliance with the following regulatory considerations in addition to NEPA:

☒ **NFMA/Land Management Plan**

☒ **ESA**

☒ **Sensitive Species (FSM 2670)**

☒ **NHPA**

☒ **Tribal Consultation**

☒ **CAA**

☒ **CWA**

☒ **Pertinent Executive Orders**

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS WITH AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS & INDIVIDUALS

The La Grande Ranger District implemented a transparent and inclusive collaboration strategy with a wide range of interested parties. The District hosted two field tours, on 08/06/2020 and 10/02/2020, to discuss representative stand conditions and potential treatments across the project area (see the project record for details on each site visit). In addition, the District developed and disseminated an interactive story map to interested parties and public providing additional details on the project. We integrated feedback and recommendations from field trip participants into our proposed action.

Some major concerns addressed in our project design and/or during contracting include:

Wildlife

- Goshawks – Wildlife specialists identified one active goshawk nest within a proposed treatment unit during 2020 surveys. This proposed treatment area was dropped from consideration. Historic goshawk nests are located well outside of the treatment areas. Follow-up surveys will be conducted before implementation. See WL-5 PDCs on p. 12.
- Neotropical Migratory Birds – See WL-7 on p. 12-13 for project design criteria addressing neotropical migrants.

Silviculture

- Silviculture and fuels treatments will maintain a mosaic of stand conditions with clumps, openings, and patches within units. Additionally, RHCA areas and other untreated areas adjacent and intermixed with the project area will add to landscape level mosaic conditions.
- Leave an opportunity for firewood cutting instead of pile burning – will pursue adding clause in timber sale contract to deck firewood material for public use as well as striving to maximize utilization of smaller diameter materials.
- When site specific conditions allow, we may kill 9-20" dbh grand fir within the dripline of older and bigger ponderosa/larch/Doug fir, and consider leaving some on site for downed wood or make available to woodcutters.

Fuels

- Ensure prescribed burning occurs after harvest and fuels reduction activities are complete- application of prescribed fire after completion of harvest and fuels reduction treatment will occur as burning windows and resources allow.
- Limb trees left on site to increase the canopy base height, where possible

The District submitted routine SOPA updates, as well as posted a legal notification in the La Grande Observer to initiate the 30-day scoping period in February 2021. The Wallowa-Whitman Public Affairs team submitted a press release to notify forest subscribers about the Five Points scoping period on social media platforms and forest mailing lists including a link to an interactive story map on the project.

The district considered comments raised during the scoping period, applied suggestions to our project design, and supplied additional analysis in our specialist reports (see project webpage for supplemental analysis and comment consideration form where our comments and responses are summarized).

The following governments, agencies, and partners have been involved in key stages of project development:

Tribal Government

- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and Nez Perce Tribe
    - Program of Work update (CTUIR - December 2020)
    - Scoping letter (February 2021)
    - 106 determination notification with 30-day consultation period (May-June 2021)

Other Agencies

- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
    - 106 determination letter, automatic concurrence reached June 2021
- Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)
    - Project overview (February 2021)
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
    - Field tour 08/06/2020
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
    - Field tour 10/02/2020

Restoration Partners

- Northern Blues Forest Collaborative, Greater Hells Canyon Council, Oregon Wild, Union County, Woodgrain
    - Developmental updates before project milestones (August/October field trip invitations, February 2021 pre-scoping notification)

RESOURCE PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS REVIEW

The Line Officer/Responsible Official has requested the following resource areas to review the proposal to determine compliance with the regulatory considerations.

Table 6: Documentation of Review Completion

Resource	Review Complete
Botany	1/5/2021 Sabrina Smits
Cultural/Heritage	5/17/2021 Erik Harvey
Engineering	1/25/2021 Richard Mills
Fisheries	5/10/2021 Will Glenn
Fuels	1/25/2021 Mike Johnson
Soils	2/18/2021 Mary Young
Silviculture	2/19/2021 Lucas Glick
Wildlife	1/29/2021 Rachel Granberg

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS REVIEW

NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT (NFMA) – LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSISTENCY

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations regarding proposal consistency with applicable Land Management Plan direction, standards and guidelines.

Botany: Consistent

Cultural/Heritage: Consistent

Engineering: Consistent

Fisheries: Consistent

Fuels: Consistent

Hydro: Consistent

Lands/Special Uses: N/A

Minerals: N/A

Range: N/A

Recreation: N/A

Scenic Resources: N/A

Soils: Consistent

Silviculture: Consistent

Special Management Areas: N/A

Wildlife: Consistent

REQUIRED MODIFICATIONS

No modifications are needed. Project Design Criteria (PDCs - see p. 11-18) ensure the project maintains Forest Plan Compliance.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES &/OR CRITICAL HABITAT

The pertinent specialists reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations for threatened, endangered and/or proposed species:

Table 7: TEPC Effect Determinations for ESA

Species/Habitat	Status	Proposed or Designated Critical Habitat Present?	Determination*	Brief Rationale (or refer to other project documentation)
Steelhead trout	Threatened	Yes	NE	No entry to RHCAs for thinning and prescribed burn ignition. No new roads will be built in RHCAs. Sedimentation and stream temperature should not be impacted during implementation of project. Stream buffers will maintain stream shading and sources for large woody material. See
Designated Critical Habitat for Steelhead trout, Chinook salmon, and Bull trout	Threatened	Yes	NE	

Species/Habitat	Status	Proposed or Designated Critical Habitat Present?	Determination*	Brief Rationale (or refer to other project documentation)
				Aquatics BE for more information.

***NE** – No Effect; **NLAA** – May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect; **LAA** – May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect; **No Jeopardy** - Not Likely to Jeopardize the Continued Existence or Adversely Modify Critical Habitat

SENSITIVE SPECIES (FSM 2670)

The pertinent specialists reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations for sensitive species:

Table 8: Sensitive Species Impact Determinations

Species	Determination*	Rationale (or refer to other project documentation)
Columbia Spotted Frog, Gray wolf	NI	See Wildlife BE
Bald Eagle, Townsend's big-eared bat, Fringed myotis, Fir pinwheel, Thinlip tightcoil, Shiny tightcoil, Western bumblebee, Suckley cuckoo bumblebee	MIIH	Species may experience temporary displacement or disruption from heavy equipment and/or prescribed fire. Refer to Wildlife BE for more information.
Lewis's Woodpecker, White-headed Woodpecker	BI	Project would improve habitat through reduction in stand density and Old Forest Single Story restoration.
Richardson's needlegrass, Cordilleran sedge, Clustered lady's slipper, Ground cedar, Bolander's spikerush, Northern twayblade, Blue Mountain penstemon, Many-flowered phlox, Douglas' clover	NI	One Forest Service sensitive plant species is documented in the project area: Trifolium douglasii (Douglas' clover). There are three known populations within the project area, totaling approximately 12 acres. Additionally, 21 other sensitive plant species have potential habitat and therefore the potential to occur within the project area. See botany BE for avoidance strategies.
Albatrellus avellaneus, Moonworts, Pine woods cryptantha, American dragonhead, Meadow lomatium, Dwarf phacelia, Umbrella false morel, Little brownwort (liverwort)	MIIH	
Redband trout, Western ridged mussel, Pacific lamprey	NI	No thinning or direct ignition in RHCAs. No new roads will be built in RHCAs. Sedimentation and stream temperature should not be impacted during implementation of project. See Aquatics BE for more information.

BI – Beneficial Impact; **NI** – No Impact; **MIIH**- May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but Will Not Likely Contribute To A Trend Towards Federal Listing Or Loss Of Viability To The Population Or Species; **WIFV** - Will Impact Individuals or Habitat with A Consequence That the Action May Contribute To A Trend Towards Federal Listing Or Cause A Loss Of Viability To The Population Or Species

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT (NHPA) – SECTION 106 REVIEW

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determination regarding Section 106 compliance:

No historic properties affected - 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1). Section 106 Review has been completed for the project area and no National Register eligible cultural sites were found.

COMMENTS

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the overall project is 3000 acres. Literature review indicated that 18 prior surveys were accomplished in the Five Points Fuels Reduction Project treatment units. However, prior survey was not considered for the current project. New survey totals 686.3 acres. No previously recorded sites are within treatment units. No new sites were located.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

Based on the nature of the proposal, the line officer/responsible official made the following determination regarding Tribal Consultation:

Consultation with Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Nez Perce Tribe has been initiated and is ongoing.

CLEAN AIR ACT (CAA)

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations regarding the CAA:

This project complies with the Clean Air Act.

CLEAN WATER ACT (CWA)

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determination:

This project complies with the Clean Water Act.

PERTINENT EXECUTIVE ORDERS

The line officer and/or applicable specialist(s) have determined the proposal is in compliance with the following Executive Orders (EO), which were deemed pertinent based on the nature of the proposal.

- EO 11988, Floodplain Management
- EO 11990, Protection of Wetlands
- EO 12898, Environmental Justice
- EO 13007, Indian Sacred Sites
- EO 13112, Invasive Species
- EO 13175, Consultation & Coordination w/ Indian Tribal Governments
- EO 13186, Migratory Birds
- EO 13443, Facilitation of Hunting Heritage & Wildlife Conservation

ADDITONAL DISCLOSURES

Carbon Storage and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Forest Service policy requires addressing climate change to continue its mission of sustaining forests and grasslands that benefit the public (USDA Forest Service 2008; USDA Forest Service 2011). The agency does not dismiss the seriousness of climate change; rather, its response reflects the magnitude of the management contribution to climate change. The management actions proposed in the Five Points project are consistent with established Forest Service carbon policy. The project was developed using Forest Service carbon principles which include emphasizing ecosystem function and resilience and recognizing that carbon is just one of the many ecosystem services the agency manages (USDA Forest Service, 2015).

The proposed action affects a small amount of forested land and carbon on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, and, in the near term, might contribute a small quantity of GHG emissions relative to national and global emissions. This proposed action will not convert forest land to other non-forest uses, thus allowing any carbon initially emitted from the proposed action to have a temporary influence on atmospheric GHG concentrations, because carbon will be removed from the atmosphere over time as the forest regrows. This proposed action is consistent with internationally recognized climate change adaptation and mitigation practices, and local recommendations identified in the **Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation in the Blue Mountains Region (Halofsky, J.E.; Peterson, D.L., eds. 2016)**.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

Pertinent specialists have reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations with regards to degree of potential effects for the resource conditions considered:

Table 10: Resource Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstance Determinations

Resources Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstances	Is there a degree of potential effect that raises uncertainty over its significance? Briefly explain.
Federally listed threatened or endangered species, **Designated critical habitat,** **Forest Service sensitive species**	**BOTANY:** NO, there is no uncertainty **Rationale for Yes/No: Project Design Criteria and Avoidance will be used to buffer any sensitive species identified.** **FISHERIES:** NO, there is no uncertainty **Rationale for Yes/No: Project activities maintain all PACFISH/INFISH buffers and will not affect RHCAs or streams.** **WILDLIFE:** NO, there is no uncertainty **Rationale for Yes/No: This project includes a routine set of activities with predictable effects and all Forest Plan standards will be maintained**
Floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds	NO, there is no uncertainty **Rationale for Yes/No: This project is designed outside of floodplains, wetlands, and municipal watersheds**
Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas	N/A, not present
Inventoried roadless areas	N/A, not present
Research natural areas	N/A, not present
American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites	NO, there is no uncertainty **Rationale for Yes/No: No previously recorded sites (18 prior surveys) or new sites were identified within the project area.**
Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas	NO, there is no uncertainty **Rationale for Yes/No: No previously recorded sites (18 prior surveys) or new sites were identified within the project area.**

SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 11: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support NEPA Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name(s)
Specialist reports	Project webpage and project file

DECISION MEMO

Five Points Fuels Reduction

U.S. Forest Service

La Grande Ranger District, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Union County, Oregon

This decision incorporates all information in this document and included in the project file.

DECISION & RATIONALE

I have decided to authorize the activities described in the Proposal section, to include any modifications identified during environmental analysis and review of regulatory compliance. This decision incorporates input from collaborative efforts and comments received from the public, and represents a thoughtful and balanced approach to addressing wildfire risk in an important wildland urban interface area adjacent to La Grande, Oregon. The decision includes actions to restore forest structure and composition consistent with the natural, historic range of variability and need for reducing wildfire risk and promoting habitat conditions important for avian focal species depending on open large tree dominated stand conditions. In addition, the decision compliments work being undertaken on adjacent private forest lands allowing for cross-boundary benefits consistent with National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy objectives of creating resilient landscapes and promoting fire adapted communities.

APPLICABLE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION & FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS

The Proposal Information section provides rationale for categorically excluding this action from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and for using the Healthy Forests Restoration Act Wildfire Resilience Categorical Exclusion. The Environmental Analysis Review section documents rationale to support my finding that no extraordinary circumstances exist, along with findings required by other applicable laws and regulations to demonstrate compliance with the regulatory framework for the activities authorized by this decision.

AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS & PERSONS CONTACTED

A list of agencies, organizations and/or persons contacted regarding this proposal is provided, along with a brief overview of comments/feedback received and how they were considered.

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

For a description of the collaborative process, see the list of agencies, organizations and/or persons contacted.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

I intend to implement this decision June 2022.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Decisions that are categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are not subject to an administrative review process (Agriculture Act of 2014 [Pub. L. No. 113-79], Subtitle A, Sec. 8006).

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

Mike Johnson, Fuels Specialist, 3502 Hwy 30, La Grande, OR, 97850, 541-962-8566

7/19/2021

Bill Gamble

District Ranger – La Grande Ranger District